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RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 001558

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG AND AF/C  
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

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TAGS: ASEC PGOV PREL KPKO UN AU SU

SUBJECT: CHADIAN REBEL REVEALS GOS SUPPORT, RELATIVE  
STRENGTH, AND FUTURE MILITARY PLANS

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)  
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**¶1.** (S) SUMMARY: On October 20, Abaker Tolli, a UFDD Khartoum-based representative told poloffs that Sudanese Intelligence summoned the leadership of all major Chadian rebel movements to Khartoum, threatening that the rebels must choose a single leader or the GoS will stop their material support for the rebels. Tolli also described in detail rebel positions, their relative strength, and the power struggle between rival leaders who "without external pressure from the Sudanese will never choose a single leader." Tolli said that the rebels' latest military plan is not/not to stage another attack on Ndjamena, but to take and hold Eastern Chad in an effort to split the country "like the Ivory Coast" and eventually force negotiations mediated by the international community. END SUMMARY.

SUDANESE FUNDING DEPENDENT ON REBEL UNIFICATION

**¶2.** (S) Having just returned from one month along the Chadian-Sudanese border, a relaxed and very forthcoming Abaker Tolli stated that the leadership of all major rebel movements (UFDD's Mahamat Nouri, UFDD/F Abdulwahid Aboud, UFCD's Adam Hasaballah, and RFC's Timane Erdimi) are now in Khartoum after being summoned by Sudanese Intelligence. According to Tolli, General Ahmed Ibrahim is the Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) official responsible for handling the Chadian Opposition. Tolli stated that Ibrahim reports directly to NISS Chief Salah Ghosh. He noted that the Sudanese told the Chadian rebels that they had to unify, as they will no longer assist each group individually. Tolli stated that the Sudanese officials also told the rebels that they do not care which leader is chosen, but that their future financial and material support is dependent upon their selection of a single leader.

DESPITE PRESSURE, REBEL LEADERSHIP STILL DIVIDED

**¶3.** (C) Tolli stated that despite pressure from the Sudanese Government, rebel leaders have been reticent to unite. Tolli said that meetings north of Geneina during Ramadan failed in bringing the movements together, and even with this additional Sudanese threat, "there is no real desire from the rebel leadership to bring the movements together." Tolli stated that it is not clear how long the Chadian rebels will stay in Khartoum and that there has not yet been a large gathering of all the rebels, as the Sudanese have first attempted to meet with each group bilaterally.

CHOOSING A LEADER

¶4. (C) According to Tolli, Abdul Wahid Aboud, Timane Erdimi, and Adam Hasaballah are all opposed to Mahamat Nouri.

Unsurprisingly, (as Nouri's representative in Khartoum) Tolli said that Nouri is "the best leader for the Chadian opposition, because he has the most experience, a good relationship with the Sudanese, and is from a tribe that is acceptable to the Sudanese, as all of the Goran are only in Chad and they will not present a threat to Sudan."

(Hasaballah is also from a tribally mixed area whose tribes do not exist in Sudan - the Ouaddai. The Sudanese do not want to see a repeat of the Zaghawa experience, an aggressive, able tribe that is found in both Chad and Sudan, providing much of the leadership of both the Deby regime and the Darfur rebels). Other leaders are pushing to hold elections to decide upon a single leader, something that Nouri disagrees with. Tolli stated that although he respects his leader's position, he disagrees with him on this point and believes that the Chadian opposition should use a democratic process to select a leader. "It is impossible to take Eastern Chad without unification, so there must be a breakthrough to this," reflected Tolli.

#### REBEL POSITIONS AND RELATIVE STRENGTH

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¶5. (C) Tolli stated that Chadian rebels maintain separate, but relatively close camps ("about 10 kilometers apart from each other in West Darfur. He provided the following information regarding rebel positions and the (possibly inflated) number of troops:

- UFCD's Adam Hasaballah is south of Geneina with 5,000 men
- UFDD is west of Geneina with 2000 troops
- UFDD/F is also west of Geneina with approximately 800 men

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- FSR's Soubiane has several small positions with only 200 men total
- RFC's Timane Erdimi has approximately 400 men in various positions
- Adam Yacoub has approximately 400 men positioned south of Geneina

Tolli stated that the Chadian armed opposition have approximately 10,000 troops total, with Hasaballah commanding the majority of troops. Tolli also recounted the history of defections and alliances that affected the buildup of Hasaballah's large force.

#### SUDANESE REBELS

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¶6. (C) Tolli stated that despite President Deby's use of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) as a defensive force, "we will never attack JEM unless we are first attacked." Tolli stated that Chadian rebels recently received intelligence that JEM is planning an attack on El Geneina both to wipe out Chadian opposition and take one of Darfur's major cities. Tolli is personally skeptical of this intelligence, however, as he believes that JEM fears Chadian opposition groups, that it lacks fighters, and that the Sudanese government is aware of such plans. Tolli stated that the GoS continues to take JEM vehicles, both through attacks and through buying vehicles from disgruntled commanders for significant sums of money. According to Tolli, the GoS took 40 JEM vehicles last month and 40 more in October. The GoS pays approximately \$20,000 USD for each rebel vehicle returned to the GoS. Tolli stated that the GoC has a similar program, paying approximately \$15,000 for Chadian rebel vehicles, a program that has significantly hurt RFC's forces.

#### INFLUENCE OF SUDANESE GOVERNMENT ON REBELS

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¶7. (C) Despite the GoS funds, equipment, and safehaven in Sudan, Tolli attempted to portray the Chadian rebels as maintaining their independence from the Sudanese government. Tolli stated that Chadian opposition previously refused GoS requests to defend El Geneina, "except for the airport as

that is where we get our supplies from the GoS, and it is in our interest to defend our supply chain." Tolli stated that it is not difficult to refuse its donor, because "we could always get support from Libya." Born on the Chadian-Libya border, Tolli boasted of deep connections to Libya, and "if the Sudanese put too much pressure on us, we can always go there for support." Tolli summarized the Sudanese influence on Chadian rebels, saying, "It is really simple - the Sudanese want to unite us, give us money, and then send us out to fight as soon as possible."

MILITARY PLAN TO TAKE EASTERN CHAD

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18. (S) Tolli stated that attacking Ndjamena is no longer the rebels' primary objective, as they now hope to take and hold eastern Chad "and essentially divide the country in two, similar to what happened in the Ivory Coast." Tolli stated this is a realistic goal for the movements, and that this will make both the Chadian government and the international community realize the need for negotiations. EUFOR's presence in eastern Chad will not deter the Chadian armed opposition, said Tolli, because EUFOR is only located near refugee or IDP camps and the opposition movements will avoid these areas. The Sudanese Government is opposed to this plan of taking Eastern Chad, stated Tolli, because the GoS's ultimate goal is to overthrow President Deby and replace him with someone more acceptable to the GoS.

COMMENT

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19. (C) Tolli's openness and relaxed attitude represents a significant change from previous meetings where he was reluctant to discuss any Sudanese support and visibly annoyed by the consistent U.S. position on the Chadian rebels and U.S. reluctance to engage in mediation between the Chadian rebels and President Deby. Tolli's forthrightness may be a byproduct of his frustration with the rebel's division, his own UFDD leadership, or the Sudanese treatment of the Chadians as an easily manipulated group. Nonetheless, we take everything that Tolli says with a grain of salt and will seek confirmation of much of his information through additional meetings with other Chadian rebel leadership

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currently in Khartoum, and observations by UN and other sources in Darfur.

FERNANDEZ